



June 2014

Senator Rockefeller and the Children's Health Insurance Program

Since the creation of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) nearly two decades ago, Senator Rockefeller has been a staunch advocate for the program and has worked since then to improve the legislation. The Senator's past and present CHIP priorities, including his introduction this month of the CHIP Extension Act of 2014, are described below.

Rockefeller CHIP Priorities: Pre-2009:

- **Creation of CHIP in 1997:** Senator Rockefeller worked tirelessly to make certain that children in families with incomes too high to qualify for Medicaid, but too low to afford private insurance, had access to affordable health care designed to meet their specific needs. Rockefeller's efforts led to the creation of the bipartisan Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) in 1997.
- **Eliminating Short-Term CHIP Funding Shortfalls.** Senator Rockefeller introduced the *Keep Children Covered Act of 2006*, bipartisan legislation to prevent Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 federal CHIP funding shortfalls that were expected in 17 states. This legislation passed as part of the National Institutes for Health (NIH) reauthorization bill and filled the FY 2007 shortfalls through mid-May 2007. Rockefeller then successfully introduced this legislation again to fill the remaining FY 2007 shortfalls.

Rockefeller Priorities – CHIP Reauthorization in 2009 and 2010:

Senator Rockefeller was actively involved in drafting the *CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2009*, which President Obama signed into law on February 4, 2009. The Senator was also instrumental in extending CHIP when the Affordable Care Act passed in 2010.

During this period, Senator Rockefeller was successful in securing the following improvements to the program:

- **More Stable Long-Term Funding.** After years of federal funding shortfalls, CHIP created more stable funding through a revised funding formula, and the creation of a

federal contingency fund to cover funding shortfalls and unexpected increases in health care costs.

- **More Children Covered.** Under CHIP, states can receive bonus payments for enrolling the lowest-income children – those eligible for Medicaid. Also, money was provided to help states with outreach efforts. This meant that states could find and enroll children who were eligible for Medicaid or CHIP but remained uninsured.
- **Improved Benefits for Children and Pregnant Women.** CHIP required all states to provide more comprehensive dental benefits for children, and raised mental health benefits to equal the level of medical and surgical benefits. Also, states were given three new options: (1) covering pregnant women for prenatal and postpartum care; (2) using CHIP funds to help families afford private coverage offered by their employers; and (3) providing supplemental dental benefits to children enrolled in private coverage.

Rockefeller Priorities for 2014: Extending CHIP through 2019:

Without further extension, CHIP funding is set to expire on September 30, 2015. If that were to happen, nearly two million children will lose access to any affordable health care, and the over 8 million children who rely on the program now will lose access to the specific services and networks that CHIP provides. Therefore, Rockefeller has introduced the ***CHIP Extension Act of 2014***, which seeks primarily to extend the program through 2019, consistent with the requirement in current law that states maintain their CHIP and Medicaid efforts through that date. The bill also gives states additional choices for improving coverage for the children and pregnant women who rely on the program, expands coverage for former foster care children as well as newborns, and builds on the quality measures created in CHIP.